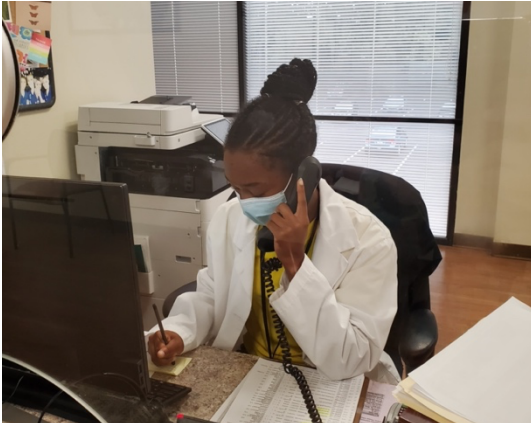


## **Adriel Strickland, graduate Paxon School for Advanced Studies**



Currently, my career aspiration is to become an Immunologist. As an AnnieRuth Foundation 2020 award recipient, I was to complete a 6-week internship experience during the summer of 2020. However, due to the pandemic, my experience was postponed; I completed it during the summer of 2021. In alignment with my aspiration, I was placed at the Florida Department of Health's Immunization Center (in various locations throughout Duval County). While there, I had the privilege to shadow two nurses; one was my mentor, Margaret Varnadore, and the other, Sheonne Warrick who was in charge of logistics and customer service. They were both wonderful and patient as I learned how to navigate through the immunization center. They even took time to show me how to properly complete my tasks until I became accustomed to the daily workplace routine.

I spent much of my experience with Ms. Warrick, learning what takes place at the front desk. She taught me things such as how to deal with different types of clients in a respectable manner. My main tasks included answering the phone, scheduling patient visits, and alphabetizing COVID screening forms. While on the phone, I learned customer service skills, including how to communicate clearly, how to empathize with clients, how to maintain a positive and professional voice tone as well as how to listen effectively (as some clients merely needed someone to talk to). Additionally, I learned things like what a religious exemption entail, how to price vaccines, and how to print immunization records. A large part of my experience consisted of me learning about things that happen in the office setting; things that a young, aspiring medical professional don't really think about. However, I also had the opportunity to watch Ms. Margaret and other nurses in the immunization center give shots (e.g., MMR, TDAP, Polio, etc.) to infants, toddlers, and teenagers. I even had an interesting case where a client came in and had a condition where they did not have any antibodies.

A part of my internship experience included Basic Life Support (BLS) training by Eunice Mathis, CEO of the Florida Training Academy. The training was both fun and informative. During the training, I learned how to give successful/effective compressions and how to assess a plethora of life saving situations. After hours of training, I passed the test which enabled me to receive a two-year BLS certification (which is going to look very impressive on my resume).

Participating in the AnnieRuth Foundation's summer internship program has been a truly amazing experience. I gained life nuggets that will continue to guide my decisions throughout my lifetime.